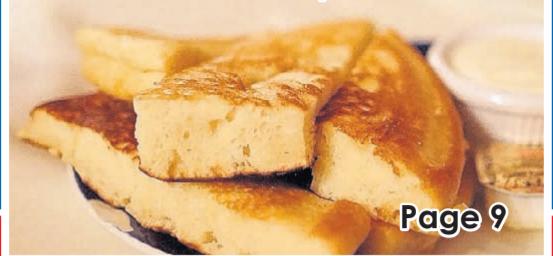


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## UN court order demanding that Israel halt its Gaza offensive further isolates the US position

By ERIC TUCKER and  
AAMER MADHANI

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A U.N. court's order that Israel halt its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah has deepened a disconnect with the United States over a military operation that faces mounting international condemnation but that American officials describe, at least for now, as limited and targeted.

The decision Friday by the International Court of Justice in The Hague adds to the pressure facing an increasingly isolated Israel, coming just days after Norway, Ireland and Spain said they would recognize a Palestinian state, and the chief prosecutor of a separate international court sought arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as well as leaders of Hamas.

Continued on Page 2



Presiding Judge Nawaf Salam reads the ruling of the International Court of Justice, or World Court, in The Hague, Netherlands, Friday, May 24, 2024, where the top United Nations court ruled on an urgent plea by South Africa for judges to order Israel to halt its military operations in Gaza and withdraw from the enclave.

(AP Photo/Peter Dejong)

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# UN court order demanding that Israel halt its Gaza offensive further isolates the US position

Continued from Front

The Biden administration stands apart from the global community — though it is opposed to a major offensive in Rafah, the administration also insists that the steps its close ally Israel has taken so far have not crossed red lines. Administration officials so far have appeared determined to press on with military and political support for Israel following the deadly Hamas attack it endured last October, while also pressuring its ally to avoid a full-scale military operation in densely populated Rafah.

"What we have seen so far in terms of Israel's military operations in that area has been more targeted and limited,



**FILE - Smoke rises following an Israeli airstrike on buildings near the separating wall between Egypt and Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, Tuesday, May 7, 2024. An order by the top United Nations court for Israel to halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah deepens its disconnect with the United States.**

(AP Photo/Ramez Habboub, File)

has not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas," national security adviser Jake Sullivan

told reporters at a White House briefing this week. But, he added, "We now have to see what unfolds from here."

A State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe the administration's internal assessment of the situation, said the operation in Gaza had "not yet moved into the core heart of Rafah that gets us to the densest of dense areas." Earlier this month, the White House announced it was pausing a shipment of some 3,500 bombs, including massive 2,000-pound explosives that the Biden administration said were leading to civilian deaths. President Joe Biden warned during a CNN interview that "if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah."

U.S. officials in pressuring Israel had suggested that a major operation was a red

line that would undermine stalled negotiations on a deal to return Israeli hostages taken by Hamas and would lead Biden to further dial back what weaponry he would send Israel.

But the tone at the White House seemed to take a notable shift this week after Sullivan returned from a visit to Israel, where he said he had been briefed on "refinements" in the Israeli plan to root out Hamas in Rafah, and to Saudi Arabia.

During Sullivan's talks with Netanyahu and other officials during the trip, the Israeli side addressed many of Biden's concerns about its plans for Rafah, according to a senior administration official who requested anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

The official said the administration stopped short of green-lighting the Israeli plan but Israeli officials' altered planning suggested they were taking Biden's concerns seriously. □

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## Republican-appointed University of Wisconsin regent refuses to step down when term ends



**FILE - Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers speaks before President Joe Biden delivers remarks on his "Investing in America agenda" at Gateway Technical College, Wednesday, May 8, 2024, in Sturtevant, Wis.** Robert Atwell, a conservative University of Wisconsin regent says he won't step down when his term ends this month. Evers has yet to announce Atwell's successor.

(AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)

**By TODD RICHMOND  
Associated Press**

**MADISON, Wis. (AP) —** A conservative University of Wisconsin regent says he won't step down when his term ends this month. Then-Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican, appointed Robert Atwell to the Board of Regents in May 2017. His seven-year

term ends this month. Atwell sent an email to Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman, regents President Karen Walsh and regents Executive Director Megan Wasley on Monday saying he won't step down until he chooses to resign or the state Senate confirms a successor. The state Supreme Court ruled in 2022 that political appointees don't have to leave their posts until the Senate confirms their successor. Atwell said in his email that Assembly Speaker Robin Vos reminded him that he could remain in his position on the regents. "I knew Bob Atwell as a person of high personal integrity," Evers told The Associated Press on Saturday. "Something has changed." UW system spokesperson Mark Pitsch didn't return a message seeking comment.

Atwell said in his email that he hoped that his "temporary continuation" as a regent will support communication between legislators and the regents. □

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## Top assassin for Sinaloa drug cartel extradited to US to face charges, Justice Department says

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A top assassin for the Sinaloa drug cartel who was arrested by Mexican authorities last fall has been extradited to the U.S. to face drug, gun and witness retaliation charges, the Justice Department said Saturday.

Néstor Isidro Pérez Salas, also known as "El Nini," is a leader and commander of a group that provided security for the sons of imprisoned drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, and also helped in their drug business, federal investigators said. The sons lead a faction known as the little Chapos, or "Chapitos," that has been identified as one of the main exporters of the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl to the U.S.

Fentanyl is blamed for about 70,000 overdose deaths per year in the United States.

"We allege El Nini was one of the Sinaloa Cartel's lead sicarios, or assassins, and was



**FILE** - Attorney General Merrick Garland speaks during a news conference at the Justice Department in Washington, Friday, April 14, 2023. A top assassin for the Sinaloa drug cartel who was arrested by Mexican authorities last fall has been extradited to the U.S. to face drug, gun and witness retaliation charges, the Justice Department said Saturday, May 25, 2024.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh, File)

responsible for the murder, torture, and kidnapping of rivals and witnesses who threatened the cartel's criminal drug trafficking enterprise," U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a news release Saturday.

Court records did not list an attorney for Pérez Salas who might comment on his behalf. The Justice Department last year announced a slew of charges against cartel leaders, and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration posted

a \$3 million reward for the capture of Pérez Salas, 31. He was captured at a walled property in the Sinaloa state capital of Culiacán last November.

In a written statement, President Joe Biden thanked Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador for extraditing Pérez Salas.

"Our governments will continue to work together to attack the fentanyl and synthetic drug epidemic that is killing so many people in our homelands and globally, and to bring to justice the criminals and organizations producing, smuggling, and selling these lethal poisons in both of our countries," Biden said.

The nickname Nini is apparently a reference to a Mexican slang saying "neither nor," used to describe youths who neither work nor study.

At the time of his arrest, Mike Vigil, former head of international operations for the U.S.

Drug Enforcement Administration, called him "a complete psychopath."

Pérez Salas commanded a security team known as the Ninis, "a particularly violent group of security personnel for the Chapitos," according to an indictment unsealed last year in New York. The Ninis "received military-style training in multiple areas of combat, including urban warfare, special weapons and tactics, and sniper proficiency."

Pérez Salas participated in the torture of a Mexican federal agent in 2017, authorities said. He and others allegedly tortured the man for two hours, inserting a corkscrew into his muscles, ripping it out and placing hot chiles in the wounds. The Ninis would take captured rivals to ranches owned by the Chapitos for execution, with some victims fed — dead or alive — to tigers the Chapitos raised as pets, the indictment said. □

## At North Carolina's GOP convention, governor candidate Robinson energizes Republicans for election

**By MAKIYA SEMINERA**  
**Associated Press**

Before Mark Robinson, North Carolina's GOP candidate for governor, even stepped on stage at the state party's convention Saturday, several state candidates took time in their own speeches to energize the crowd by vouching for Robinson's gubernatorial bid.

When the state's lieutenant governor did take to the stage more than an hour and a half into the NCGOP Convention's Old North State Dinner in Greensboro, Robinson started off his fiery speech denouncing the media for focusing too much on Donald Trump's ongoing criminal and civil trials and not the "failures

of the Democratic Party." He also shared his vision for the state, which he said centers around improving the economy and education. "Trust me, there are enough people in this state who are talented enough and share the vision that we have that we can make this a reality, folks," Robinson said during his speech, which was livestreamed by Triad television outlet WGHP.

The 55-year-old Republican is embroiled in one of the most hotly contested gubernatorial races of the 2024 election against his Democratic opponent and state Attorney General Josh Stein.

Robinson's brash political style has intrigued Trump

supporters, as well as the former president himself, who formally endorsed Robinson in March at a Greensboro rally and called him "Martin Luther King on steroids."

Robinson has also caught the attention of critics who say his rhetoric on the LGBTQ community and restricting abortion access should be a cause for concern.

The Greensboro native has previously defended his past remarks by saying he can separate his religious views from public office and wants to make North Carolina a "destination state for life."

"North Carolina is literally on the cusp of exploding economically," Robinson said. "It's time for us to direct that



**Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson speaks at the North Carolina GOP Convention in Greensboro, N.C., on Saturday, May 25, 2024.**

(Woody Marshall/News & Record via AP)

explosion in the right way and cause this state to be something better than it already is." Education in North Carolina is another priority for Robinson, who said the state's education system is "in shambles."

But the state of education isn't at the fault of teachers, Robinson said, adding that he puts schoolteachers in the same category as police officers. □

## Man accused in fiery liquid attacks on New York City subway riders

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A man set a cup of liquid on fire and tossed it at a fellow subway rider in New York City, setting the victim's shirt ablaze and injuring him, police said Sunday.

The random attack happened on a No. 1 train in lower Manhattan on Saturday afternoon, city police said, adding that the suspect was in custody on an array of criminal charges. Authorities also charged the man in connection with a similar fiery assault on the subway in February.

The victim from Saturday, a 23-year-old man, was recovering at a hospital. He told the New York Post that he shielded his fiancee and cousin from the burning liquid and his shirt caught on fire. He said he slapped himself to put out the flames. Doctors told him he had burns on about a third of his body, he said.

"He had a cup," the victim told the Post. "He made fire



**FILE** - The MTA logo is seen on the side of a New York City subway car, April 23, 2020, in the Queens borough of New York. A man set a cup of liquid on fire and tossed it at fellow subway rider in New York City, setting the victim's shirt ablaze and injuring him. The random attack happened on a No. 1 train in lower Manhattan on Saturday afternoon, May 25, 2024, city police said, adding that the suspect was in custody.

and he threw it all."

While violent crime is rare in the city's subway system, which serves about 3 million riders a day, some high-pro-

file attacks this year have left some riders on edge. They include the death of a man who was shoved onto the tracks in East Harlem in

March and a few shootings. The suspect in Saturday's assault, Nile Taylor, 49, was arrested a short time after it happened when police

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File)



A Guadalupe Virgin statue is seen in the destroyed home of Juana Landeros, who rode out deadly tornado with her husband and her 9-year-old son when it rolled through the previous night, Sunday, May 26, 2024, in Valley View, Texas. Powerful storms left a wide trail of destruction Sunday across Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after obliterating homes and destroying a truck stop where drivers took shelter during the latest deadly weather to strike the central U.S.

(AP Photo/Julio Cortez)

**By SEAN MURPHY and JULIO CORTEZ Associated Press**  
**VALLEY VIEW, Texas (AP) —** The dazed residents of a north Texas county sifted through their mangled homes on Sunday after seven people there were killed when a tornado ripped through the remote region near the tiny community of Valley View.

Cooke County Sheriff Ray Sappington said there's "just a trail of debris left" in the area bordering Oklahoma where

the dead included two children, ages 2 and 5, in Valley View, a town where barely 800 people live. The bodies of three family members were found in one residence, the sheriff said.

The county bore the brunt of powerful weekend storms that left 15 people dead across Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. Tens of thousands of residents were without power across the three states.

Kevin Dorantes, 20, was in

## In a north Texas county, dazed residents sift through homes mangled by a tornado

nearby Carrollton when he learned the tornado was bearing down on the Valley View neighborhood where he lived with his father and brother. He called and told them to take cover in the windowless bathroom, where the pair rode out the storm and survived without injury. Some of Dorantes' neighbors weren't so lucky.

As he wandered through the neighborhood surveying downed power lines and devastated properties, he came upon a family whose home was reduced to a pile of splintered rubble. A father and son were trapped under debris, and friends and neighbors worked frantically to get them out, Dorantes said. "They were conscious but severely injured," Dorantes said. "The father's leg was snapped."

He said they managed to put the father on a mattress and carry him to a truck, where he and his son were driven to an ambulance at a nearby convenience store.

Valley View Chief of Police Justin Stamms said the small agricultural community was reeling. "It's been exhausting and heartbreak," Stamms said. "I've seen this kind of damage on TV, but never in person before this. It's terrible." He said most of the town's residents work in farming, or at a local feed store and a postal service facility. Many of its displaced residents are staying at makeshift shelters set up inside area churches, he said.

Cynthia De La Cruz said her family hoped to put some of their possessions into storage while they figure out where they're going to live.

"We're trying to take whatever we can save," she said. De La Cruz described the town about 55 miles (88 kilometers) north of Fort Worth as a tight-knit area of mostly Latino people.

"I know this community really sticks together when bad things happen," she said. Men were already busy Sunday afternoon putting a new

roof on a heavily damaged home. Teams of neighbors and volunteers from a local church helped residents carry furniture and other belongings from inside battered homes into pickups and trailers.

Christopher Landeros, 19, was at dinner in nearby Lewisville when his mom, Juana Landeros, called him and said, "come find us in the truck." Juana, her husband and their 9-year-old son Larry took shelter in their pickup truck under floor mats in their garage. The garage is now gone. A tree crashed through windows. "It was horrific. Hellish. I just kept thinking we were going to die," Juana said.

Christopher ran to a neighbor's house two streets over to help pull out an injured man. The man's wife and two kids were killed.

The street into their Valley View neighborhood was lined with twisted sheets of metal, pieces of home siding, chunks of plywood, toppled power poles and trees stripped of limbs and bark. □

## EU foreign chief says Israel must respect UN court, control settler violence in the West Bank

By RAF CASERT and SYLVAIN PLAZY  
Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — The European Union's foreign policy chief insisted Sunday that Israel must abide by the U.N. top court's rulings and end its offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and, at the same time, questioned the possible involvement of authorities in the settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

On a day that visiting Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa basked in the attention after two EU nations and Norway pledged to recognize a Palestinian state, Josep Borrell further pressured Israel to take immediate actions to make sure that tax income meant for the Palestinian authorities is no longer stopped.

The demands came at the end of the week that saw the international community put increasing pressure on Israel to fundamentally change the course of the war it wages on Hamas in the Gaza Strip through international court action and diplomatic maneuvering. Borrell insisted Israel had driven the Palestinians to the edge of a catastrophe because "the situation in Gaza is beyond words. The occupied West Bank is on



**Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority Mohammed Mustafa, left, speaks after receiving a document handed over by Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, right, prior to a meeting for talks on the Middle East in Brussels, Sunday, May 26, 2024. Norway on Sunday handed over papers to the Palestinian prime minister to officially give it diplomatic recognition as a state in a largely symbolic move that has infuriated Israel. The formal recognition by Norway, Spain and Ireland, which all have a record of friendly ties with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, while long advocating for a Palestinian state, is planned for Tuesday.**

(AP Photo/Virginia Mayo)

the brink, risking an explosion any time." While most of the global attention is centered on Gaza, Borrell said that "we should not forget what's happening in the West Bank," where the seat of the Palestinian Authority is based.

Rights groups and Palestinian residents have said that Israeli forces often provide an umbrella of security to armed settlers attacking Palestinian towns and nomadic communities.

Such settler violence, Borrell said, "is coupled with un-

precedented Israeli settlement expansions and land grabbing."

Borrell also countered Israeli threats to hit the Palestinians financially. On Wednesday, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich said he would stop transferring tax revenue earmarked for the Palestinian Authority, a move that threatens to handicap its already waning ability to pay salaries to thousands of employees.

Under interim peace accords in the 1990s, Israel collects tax revenue on

behalf of the Palestinians, and it has used the money as a tool to pressure the PA. After the Oct. 7 Hamas attack that triggered the war in Gaza, Smotrich froze the transfers, but Israel agreed to send the money to Norway, which transferred it to the PA. Smotrich said Wednesday that he was ending that arrangement.

"Unduly withheld revenues have to be released," said Borrell, with Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide standing next to him.

Eide was in Brussels Sunday to hand over diplomatic papers to Mustafa ahead of Norway's formal recognition of a Palestinian state, a largely symbolic move that has infuriated Israel.

The formal recognition by Norway as well as Spain and Ireland — which all have a record of friendly ties with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, while long advocating for a Palestinian state — is planned for Tuesday.

Some 140 countries — more than two-thirds of the United Nations — recognize a Palestinian state but a majority of the 27 EU nations still do not. Several have said they would recognize it when the conditions are right.

The EU, the United States and Britain, among others, back the idea of an independent

Palestinian state alongside Israel but say it should come as part of a negotiated settlement.

Belgium, which holds the EU presidency, has said that first the Israeli hostages held by Hamas need to be freed and the fighting in Gaza must end. Some other governments favor a new initiative toward a two-state solution, 15 years after negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians collapsed.

Sunday's handover of papers came only two days after the United Nations' top court ordered Israel to immediately halt its military offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah in the latest move that piled more pressure on the increasingly isolated country.

Days earlier, the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Court requested arrest warrants for Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with Hamas officials.

The war in Gaza started after Hamas-led militants stormed across the border, killing 1,200 people and taking some 250 hostage. Israel's ensuing offensive has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and has caused a humanitarian crisis and a near-famine. □

## Macron begins the first state visit to Germany by a French president in 24 years

**BERLIN (AP)** — President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday started the first state visit to Germany by a French head of state in 24 years, a three-day trip meant to underline the strong ties between the European Union's traditional leading powers ahead of European Parliament elections in which far-right parties in both countries hope for gains. The visit was originally meant to take place last July but was postponed at the last minute due to rioting in France following the killing of a 17-year-old by police.

While Macron is a frequent visitor to Germany as Paris

and Berlin try to coordinate their positions on EU and foreign policy, this is the first state visit with full pomp since Jacques Chirac came in 2000. Macron and his wife, Brigitte, are being hosted by Germany's largely ceremonial president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

It is "proof of the depth of the friendship between France and Germany" that Macron is visiting as Germany celebrates the 75th anniversary of its post-World War II constitution and before it marks the 35th anniversary in November of the fall of the Berlin Wall, Steinmeier said. Steinmeier

is holding a state banquet for Macron at his Bellevue palace in Berlin on Sunday evening before the two presidents travel on Monday to the eastern city of Dresden, where Macron will make a speech, and on Tuesday to Muenster in western Germany. The state visit will be followed later Tuesday by a meeting between Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and ministers from both countries at a government guest house outside Berlin.

Germany and France, which have the EU's biggest economies, have long been viewed as the motor of European



**German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, right, and French President Emmanuel at the end of a press conference at Bellevue Place in Berlin, Germany, Sunday, May 26, 2024.**

(AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

integration, though there have often been differences in policy and emphasis between the two neighbors on a range of matters. That was evident earlier this

year in different positions on whether Western countries should rule out sending ground troops to Ukraine. Both nations are strong backers of Kyiv. □

# Chile accuses volunteer firefighter and ex-forestry official with causing huge fire that killed 137

By PATRICIA LUNA

Associated Press

**SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)** — A Chilean judge on Saturday ordered a volunteer firefighter and a former forestry official detained for allegedly planning and causing a mammoth forest fire in the Valparaiso region that caused 137 deaths and made 16,000 people homeless in February.

The court in Valparaiso ruled the two men, who were arrested Friday, could be held for 180 days while they are investigated. The chief prosecutor in the case, Osvaldo Ossandón, told journalists that the main suspect is Francisco Mondaca, a 22-year-old volunteer firefighter in Valparaiso who is accused of physically starting the fire. He said flares and fireworks were found in Mondaca's vehicle. The other suspect was identified as Franco Pinto, a former employee of the National Forest Corporation. He is accused of planning the



FILE - A resident flees an encroaching forest fire in Vina del Mar, Chile, Feb. 3, 2024. Police arrested a suspect on Friday, May 24, 2024, for allegedly causing the forest fire that left 137 dead and injured some 16,000 people in the Valparaíso region.

(AP Photo/Esteban Felix, File)

crime. The regional prosecutor for Valparaiso, Claudia Perivancich, said investigators have evidence the two men agreed "in advance

to carry out conduct of this type when the weather conditions were adequate."

Prosecutors said that according to Mondaca's testimony,

there was an economic motive behind the plot — providing more work in fighting fires. They said they had not ruled out the possibility of

more people being involved. The commander of the Valparaiso Fire Department, Vicente Maggiolo, said, "We are very dismayed by the situation."

Maggiolo called it an isolated incident and said it should not tarnish the work of the fire department. "We have been saving lives for more than 170 years," he told TVN. Christian Little, executive director of the forestry department, described the detention of a former official as "a pain" for the agency.

Both the fire department and forestry agency said they would tighten hiring procedures.

The megafire began Feb. 2 in the Lago Peñuelas nature reserve, in the central region of Chile, and for several days burned several communes, including destroying more than 10,000 homes. It is considered Chile's worst tragedy since a magnitude 8.8 earthquake killed more than 500 people on Feb. 27, 2010. □

## G7 officials make progress but no final deal on money for Ukraine from frozen Russian assets



Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors pose for the family picture at the G7 Finance Ministers meeting in Stresa, northern Italy, Friday, May 24, 2024.

(AP Photo/Antonio Calanni)

By DAVID McHUGH

AP Business Writer

**FRANKFURT, Germany (AP)**

— Finance officials from the Group of Seven rich democracies said they had moved toward agreement on a U.S. proposal to squeeze more money for Ukraine from Russian assets frozen in their countries. But the ministers left

a final deal to be worked out ahead of a June summit of national leaders.

"We are making progress in our discussions on potential avenues to bring forward the extraordinary profits stemming from immobilized Russian sovereign assets to the benefit of Ukraine," the draft statement said, without providing details.

Despite the progress made at the meeting in Stresa, on the shores of Lago Maggiore in northern Italy, a final decision on how the assets will be used will rest with the G7 national leaders, including U.S. President Joe Biden, next month at their annual summit in Fasano, in southern Italy. Host Finance Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti said that "progress has been made so far" but that there were "legal and technical issues that have to be overcome."

"It is not an easy task but we are working on it," he said at a news conference following the end of the meeting.

Ukrainian Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko joined the finance ministers and central bank heads at their concluding session on Saturday. "I am satisfied with the progress," he told journalists afterwards. He said the G7 ministers "are working very hard to find a reliable construction for Ukraine." The U.S. Congress has passed

legislation allowing the Biden administration to seize the roughly \$5 billion in Russian assets located in the U.S., but European countries have a strong voice in the matter since most of the \$260 billion in Russian central bank assets frozen after the Feb. 24, 2022, invasion are held in their jurisdictions.

Citing legal concerns, European officials have balked at outright confiscating the money and handing it to Ukraine as compensation for the destruction caused by Russia.

Instead, they plan to use the interest accumulating on the assets, but that's only around \$3 billion a year — about one month's financing needs for the Ukrainian government. U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen is pushing for borrowing against the future interest income from the frozen assets. That would mean Ukraine could be given as much as \$50 billion immediately.

But the proposal has run into concerns from European members about the legal complexities, and about concerns that Russia could retaliate against the diminished number of Western companies and individuals who still have holdings in Russia, or against the Euroclear securities depository in Belgium where the bulk of the funds is held.

Russia has published a decree from President Vladimir Putin allowing confiscation of assets of U.S. companies and individuals as compensation for any Russian assets seized in the United States.

The ministers also discussed what to do about China's outsized, state-backed production of green energy technology, which the U.S. considers a threat to the global economy. The U.S. has imposed major new tariffs on electric vehicles, semiconductors, solar equipment and medical supplies imported from China. □

## Aruba: the legend behind its name

**(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.**

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

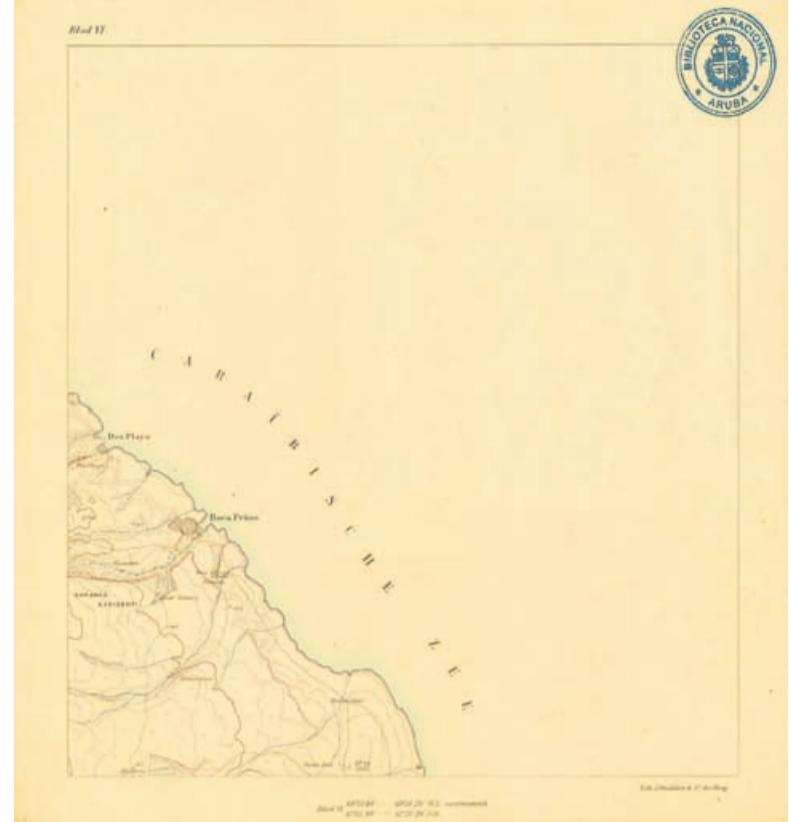
Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names\*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Caquies when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: Un storia di e Indian Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock





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## Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters

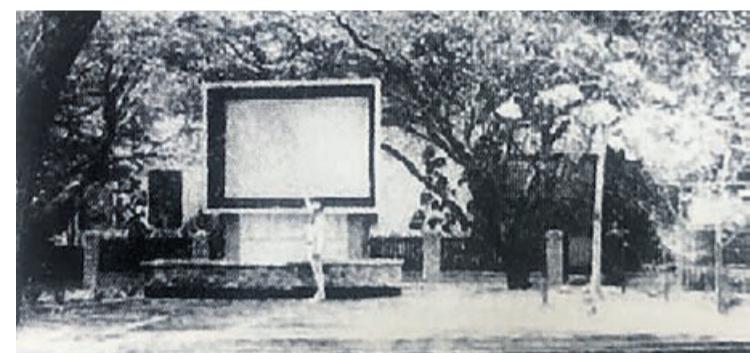
(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theaters. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located.



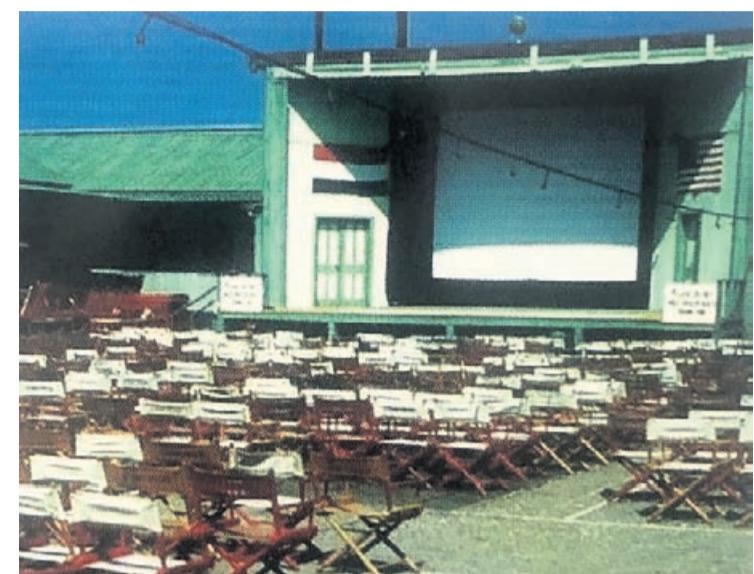
The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who



worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.

In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.



The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened

during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi. □

**Source:** "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.

## Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott Aruba Surf Club!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty,

and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to

guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

#### The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors  
Mr. Todd & Mrs. Kimberly Benson from Lake Orion Michigan, United States.  
Ms. Kendall Benson from Lake Orion Michigan, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Marriott Aruba Surf Club bestowed the certifi-

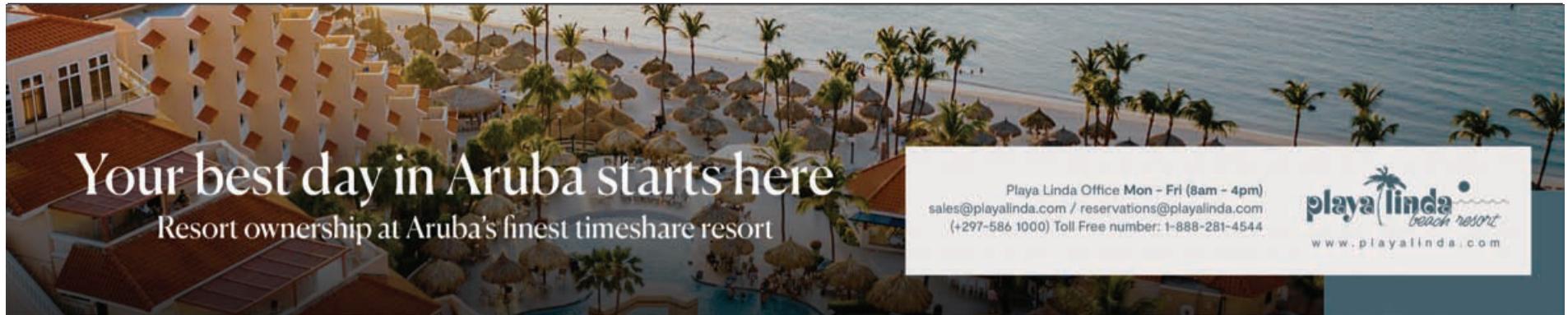
cate to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's people
- Aruba's beach & Golden sunshine.
- Aruba's wildlife, especially the iguanas.
- Aruba's impeccable & Aruban cuisine
- "Marriott Aruba Surf Club is our home away from home"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □





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## Best spots to view the sunset

**(Oranjestad)**—Today we celebrate Valentine's Day, and what can be more romantic than surprising your partner with a date watching the sunset. Aruba's sunset leave many speechless, and luckily, the best spots to view the sunset are entirely accessible and easy to find. Here are some of the best places to view the sunset on the island.

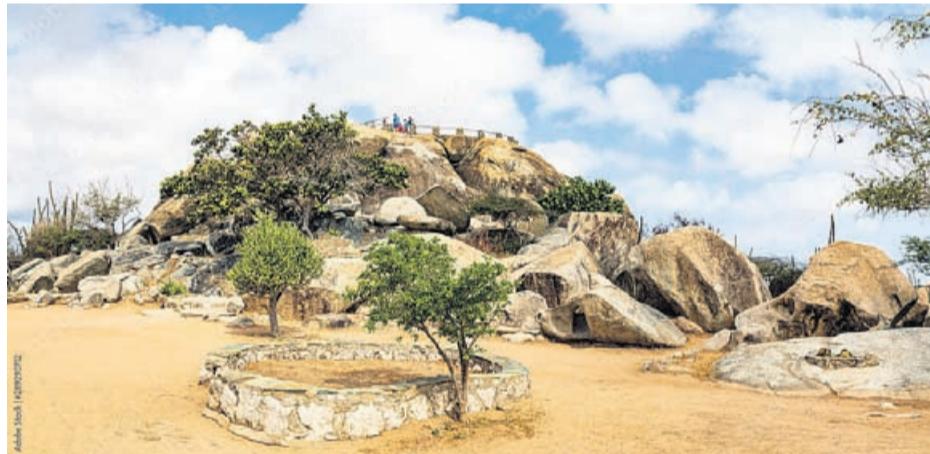
### California Light House

Of course, being one of the highest point easily accessible to locals and tourists, the California Light House hill not only offers a tremendous view of the sunset, but also a breath taking scenery of most of the island. In the distance you can spot all the hotels, the western shoreline and the wild waves that

crash on the northern side of the island.

### Manchebo & Eagle Beach

Speaking of the western shoreline, the best spots for viewing the sunset on the beach has to be either Manchebo Beach or at Eagle Beach, which stretch along the entire western coast of the island starting from behind Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort up to the Amsterdam Manor roundabout. The sunset on these beaches is truly breathtaking; the sky and ocean look so big and spacious, and paired with the orange/pink hue of the sunset, the white sandy beaches and the soft sounds of waves crashing—it can only be described as an experience!\*



### Arashi Beach

Another beach that has to be considered as another great spot to view the sunset. Arashi Beach is the last beach you will find along the western coast line, just before you drive up the hill to the California Light House. A favorite for surfers and body boarders, the Arashi sky stretches out for miles, lending a spectacular canvas for the sun to create a masterpiece of orange, pink and purple hue.

### Hooiberg Hill

These last two options are for more active couples. If you and your partner like to hike, the Hooiberg Hill may be a great place for you

to get your daily workout in and enjoy a beautiful view of the sunset and the island as a little reward. Climb on top the 587-step stairs and reach the top to enjoy this incredible scenery.

### Casibari Rock Formation

If you're a rock climber, you might enjoy watching the sunset on top of the Casibari Rock Formation. It's no Yosemite, but it does offer a fun little exercise to get to the top. But if you prefer not to get your hands a little dirty, you can always use the stairs in the back.

Editor's note: This spot may be my personal favorite, if you couldn't already tell...□

## Dining in? Try making a local favorite

### How to make "pan bati"

**(Oranjestad)**—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

#### Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour  
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal (we recommend the Harina PAN brand)  
2 tbsp baking powder  
1 1/3 cup of milk  
1 pinch of salt  
2 tbsp of granulated sugar  
Oil for cooking

#### Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl

first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top!□



## Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

**According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.**

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algemesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Alvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Sil-



vester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vega called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

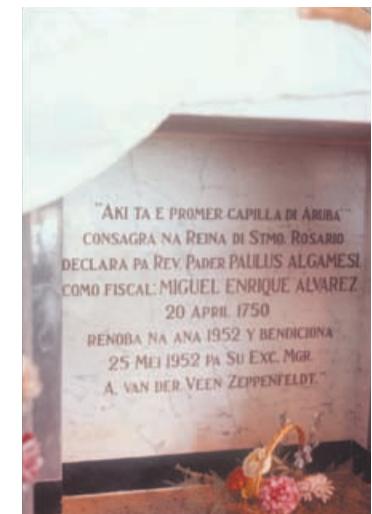
At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants of the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed

that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto Vista, people can no lon-

ger see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester and Miguel Alvarez, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived.



About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past. □

## Craving a late-night snack? We got you covered!

**(Oranjestad)—After a night out it's custom to grab yourself a late-night snack on the road. Here in Aruba, there are dozens of food trucks that you can visit to enjoy a late-night bite. Here are a few that can be found in the down town/hotel area.**

### Chalo burger



Chalo burger is a favorite among locals, and it's due to its popularity that it has branched out to dif-

ferent parts on the island. One of its main locations is in Palm Beach, near the hotel area. Chalo offers a variety of fast-food meals, like hamburgers, hotdogs, loaded fries and more! A popular dish among locals is the Salchipapa: loaded fries with sausages, cheese and a mix of sweet and savory sauce. Perfect for those late-night cravings!

Chalo is open Wednesdays through Mondays from 7pm to 12 am (Fridays till 1am), and is located at Palm Beach 178 (a little past the roundabout near the Piazza Gianni's). Other Locations include Tanki Leendert and Savaneta.

### Julio's Corner



Situated in a nice little corner off the highway, Julio's Corner has a



huge menu comprised of different dishes and snacks, all made with a Venezuelan twist! From arepas to chicken wings, to pizzas and burgers, Julio's Corner has it all to satisfy your taste! Editor's choice for what to get at Julio's Corner is the quesadilla, which comes with a side of fries.

Julio's Corner is open Mondays through Saturday from 6pm to 2am (Fridays and Saturdays up to 4am), and is located in the parking lot of the Eagle Bowling Palace, right on the other side of the road from the Sasaki gas station.

### Habibi Express

Habibi Express is a Lebanese food truck stand, one of very few food trucks on the island to sell Mediterranean food. Located right at the entrance of The Local Market near the cruise ship port, here you can



fill your stomach (and heart) with a variety of options like shawarmas, doners, kapsalons and more, all 100% halal. When asked, the chef there recommends all foodies to try their lamb shawarma, as it's a favorite among guests.

Habibi Express is open every day from 5pm to 12am. While you're there, how about a picture with the genie? □



## Unique fauna of Aruba

For a small island, Aruba sure has a lot of unique treasures. Among these, we have some subspecies of animals that are unique to our island. These have evolved to perfectly adapt to our desert climate and make Aruba their home. At the same time, they are part of what makes Aruba truly one of a kind.

### Cascabel (rattlesnake, *Crotalus durissus unicolor*)

According to the Arikok National Park, Aruba knows two kinds of snakes, the Santanero and the Cascabel. The cascabel belongs to the rattlesnake family. The cascabel is the only venomous snake from Aruba. It has a length of 65cm to 100cm, and is about 4 to 5cm wide. Its color varies from light brown to grey-brown, and its underbelly is white. On its back there are marks that are a little darker, in the shape of diamonds.

Its reproduction is oviparous, meaning the offspring can hatch from their eggs just before, during or immediately after laying.

The cascabel lives mainly in the Arikok National Park. It likes to live in dark places, and is thus found hidden among the limestone rocks and under stones. As a defense mechanism, the cascabel uses its rattle as a warning, and it is not an aggressive animal.

The cascabel feeds on lizards, small mammals such as rats and mice. It paralyzes or kills its prey with its venom, which is injected through a bite. The enemies of the cascabel are donkeys, goats, humans and cars. Humans are the biggest enemy of the cascabel, as they kill them and destroy their habitat for urbanization.

### Shoco (burrowing owl, *Athene cunicularia arubensis*)

The shoco is a small bird which is seldom seen. They are active during the day but are more active later in the day and at night for hunting.



These owls have very good night vision and very good hearing. The shoco is the national symbol of Aruba.

The shoco has about 20cm of length, and the females are slightly heavier than the males. They are light brown in color, with many white spots. The belly of the Shoco is either white or light brown, and the shoco has striking yellow eyes. Its beak is yellow/green. Young owls do not have white spots and are lighter in color. The nest of the shoco is a burrow in the ground. If the shoco cannot find a burrow, it will dig one in soft soil. The shoco lays one or two eggs every other day until all the eggs are laid – a shoco can lay up to four eggs. The first owlets hatch after three to four weeks. The shoco owl takes care of the owlets for three months until they leave the nest. Only a few owlets survive.

The owls dig burrows in the ground with low grass vegetation. An owl can live up to nine years.

Its defense mechanism is simply to fly away or retreat to its burrows. They eat mostly insects, mice and lizards, and the main threats to their survival are boas – an invasive species introduced by humans as pets – and humans through destruction of their habitat.

### Prikichi

#### (parakeet, *Aratinga pertinax*)

The Prikichi is the national bird of Aruba. On Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, parakeets can be found, but each of the three islands has a different breed. The Yellow-shouldered Amazon parakeet that we have on Aruba is also found along the coast of Venezuela. Unfortunately, there is interbreeding between the breeds due to cage birds from, for example, Curaçao being released on Aruba. The parakeet population on Aruba is in danger due to extensive deforestation occurring on the island because of the growing population.



The prikichi weighs between 90 to 100 grams. It has a greenish-brown head with some yellow around the eye. The back and wings of the parakeet are dark green, and the underside of the body is a lighter shade of green. There is also a bit of blue in the wings. The parakeet's beak is gray/black.

Parakeets often use termite nests as breeding sites. Parakeets are found in all natural environments (mondi) of the island. It defends itself by flying away and loud cries. Parakeets eat seeds from the pods of the Kwihi tree, Divi Divi, and columnar cactus. They also consume natural fruits. Its main predators are boa constrictors, humans.

### Conew (cottontail rabbit, *Sylvilagus floridanus nigronuchalis*)

The Eastern Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) was probably brought over to the island by Indian settlers thousands of years ago as a source of food. This rabbit, locally known as Conew, has spread all over the island and has become part of our ecosystem. The very adaptable Conew can live in a wide variety of habitats, including Aruba's xeric scrublands, where it typically grazes on weeds and grasses.

The Aruban Conew has a brownish grey color and a distinctive white belly. This white fur extends to the bottom of the tail which becomes visible as the rabbit runs. These rabbits can grow up to approximately 40 centimeters in length over their

short lifespan of 3 years. Cottontail rabbits reach reproductive maturity when they are just 2 to 3 months old. A female rabbit, called a doe, finds a suitable nest spot under a shrub or rocks and lines it with fur. She can have an average of 3 to 4 litters per year averaging 5 young each. The doe only visits her young once or twice a day to nurse her babies for a period of 2 to 3 weeks. The young reach independence at 4 to 5 weeks.

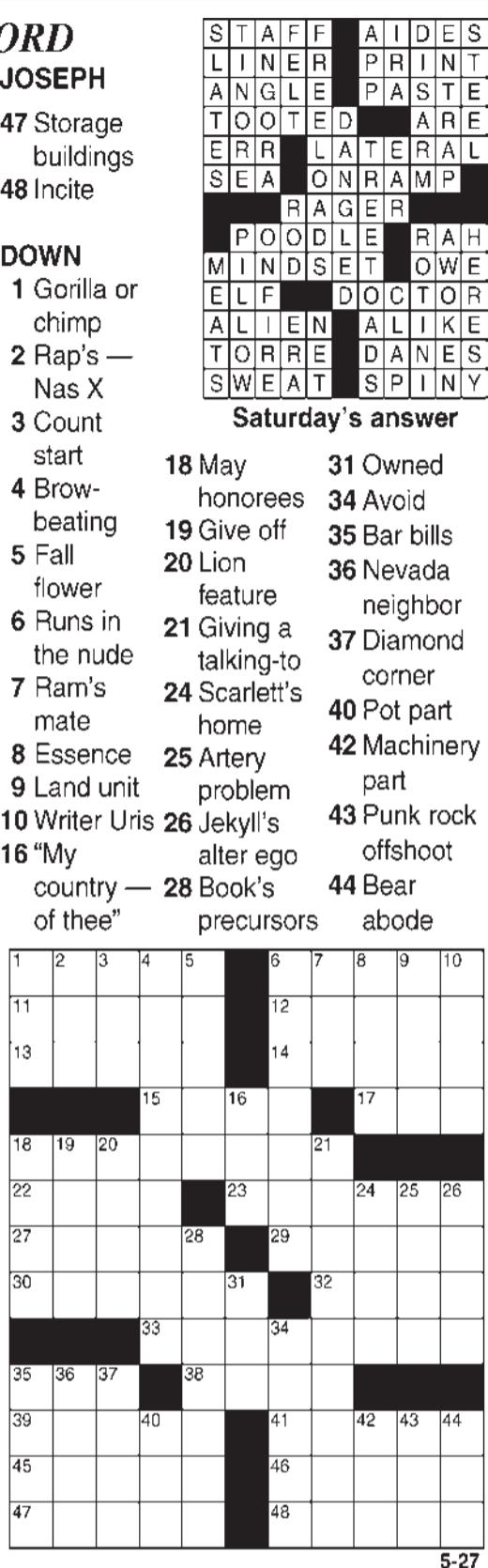
The Aruban Conew is an endangered species and protected by Aruban law. The Conew is thought to have drastically declined due to an increase in human activities, habitat fragmentation and predation by the invasive Boa constrictor as well as feral cats and dogs. However, recently there seem to be more rabbit sightings in rural and wilderness areas and also in the National Park. This could be linked to a recent decline of the invasive Boa population after the long period of drought. As the Conew can reproduce very quickly, a short break in predation pressure can lead to a fast increase of rabbits. Sadly, the Boas are back on the rise again with the truly wet rainy seasons we have recently experienced. This could cause a new decline in the Conew population that was just starting to recover.

These are but a few of Aruba's beautiful inhabitant, which we must all contribute to protect. For more information, visit <https://www.arubanationalpark.org/main/flora-fauna/> □

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Maui greeting
  - 6 Flower part
  - 11 Trees with needles
  - 12 Once and again
  - 13 Put in office
  - 14 Stylishly quaint
  - 15 Head, to Henri
  - 17 Rooster's mate
  - 18 Honorary monument
  - 22 Poet Khayyám
  - 23 Rough drawing
  - 27 Some skirts
  - 29 Like fish
  - 30 Awful smell
  - 32 Stepped on
  - 33 Get a diploma
  - 35 Soaking spot
  - 38 Smell
  - 39 Even a little
  - 41 Cut into cubes
  - 45 Pesto herb
  - 46 Ageless dwarf
- DOWN**
- 47 Storage buildings
  - 48 Incite
  - 1 Gorilla or chimp
  - 2 Rap's — Nas X
  - 3 Count start
  - 4 Brow-beating
  - 5 Fall flower
  - 6 Runs in the nude
  - 7 Ram's mate
  - 8 Essence
  - 10 Writer Uris
  - 16 "My country —
  - 18 May honorees
  - 19 Give off
  - 20 Lion feature
  - 21 Giving a talking-to
  - 24 Scarlett's home
  - 25 Artery problem
  - 26 Jekyll's
  - 28 Book's precursors
  - 31 Owned
  - 34 Avoid
  - 35 Bar bills
  - 36 Nevada neighbor
  - 37 Diamond corner
  - 40 Pot part
  - 42 Machinery part
  - 43 Punk rock offshoot
  - 44 Bear abode



5-27

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONG FELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-27

CRYPTOQUOTE

EV EY XHC QY VGB KESELJ ...  
VH AB RBREZPVBR VH VGB  
QLXELEYGBR OHCD OGEZG VGBT  
OGH XHQJGV GBCB GPSB YH LHAKT  
PRSPLZBR. — PACPGPF KELZHKL

Saturday's Cryptoquote: I DON'T HAVE ANY BAD HABITS. THEY MIGHT BE BAD HABITS FOR OTHER PEOPLE, BUT THEY'RE ALL RIGHT FOR ME.  
— EUBIE BLAKE

## Cruise ship Schedule: May 01 - May 28 2024

TUE	07	CARNIVAL MAGIC	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	14	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL HORIZON	08.00	22.00	C	1
WED	15	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	21	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	B	1
		CARNIVAL VISTA	13.00	23.00	C	1
WED	22	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	22.00	C	1
MON	27	ISLAND PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
TUE	28	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1

## Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

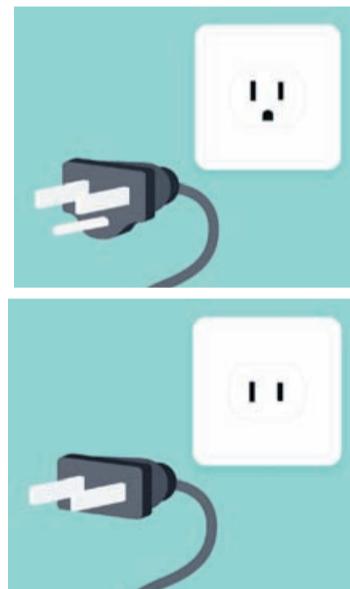
(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic—but important—information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

### Supermarket hours



### Electrical power



### Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

### Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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# Zimbabwe authorities mix charm with force in an attempt to shore up the world's newest currency

By FARAI MUTSAKA

Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)

— The introduction of the world's newest currency in April inspired a reggae artist to record a song praising the ZiG, or Zimbabwe Gold. The catchy tune, titled "Zig Mari," received generous play on state television and radio. The musician, Ras Caleb, received a car and \$2,000 — ironically paid in greenbacks, not the new ZiGs — from a businessman with close ties to Zimbabwe's ruling party and President Emmerson Mnangagwa; he said he wanted to reward an act he considered "patriotic."

Although money typically doesn't require publicity, Zimbabwe's sixth national currency in 15 years needs all the help it can get.

Desperate to halt a money crisis underlining the country's economic troubles, the government launched the gold-backed ZiG, the latest attempt to replace the Zimbabwe dollar, which had been battered by depreciation and often outright rejection by people unwilling to put their faith in it.

Senior officials from the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and the ruling ZANU-PF party embarked on a flurry of public rallies and meetings to encourage the skeptical population to now embrace the ZiG ahead of the U.S. dollar — also legal tender in the southern



An elderly man waits to withdraw cash from a bank in Harare, Zimbabwe, Tuesday April 30, 2024. Zimbabwe introduced the world's newest currency in April, the ZiG, or Zimbabwe Gold.

(AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)

African nation. Commercial jingles heralding the currency flooded the airwaves along with Caleb's single. Yet despite the charm offensive, the ZiG is facing a familiar problem: public mistrust and structural barriers that have people still clamoring for U.S. dollars. Although the ZiG has largely held its value on the official market, it has tumbled on the black market, where \$1 can be exchanged for up to 17 ZiGs.

Law enforcement agents have arrested more than 200 street currency dealers on allegations of flouting foreign currency exchange regulations, national police spokesman Paul Nyathi said. The government accuses them of undermining and devaluing the new currency by using exchange rates higher than the official one.

The crackdown is incongruous, because Zimbabwe has a long history of street currency dealers whose unofficial rates often carry the day. Many shops and merchants also ignore the official rate and only accept the local currency at their own rates. And many vendors, particularly in the unlicensed sector that employs more than 80% of adult Zimbabweans, still only accept the dollar.

What's more, the government has allowed some businesses, such as gas stations, to refuse to accept the ZiG in favor of U.S. dollars. Some departments, like the office that is-

sues and renews passports, also accept only greenbacks. Many others still list their fees in U.S. dollars, although they accept the equivalent in local currency.

The government has announced fines up to 200,000 ZiG or about \$15,000, for businesses that fail to stick to the official exchange rate. Authorities have also frozen bank accounts of some businesses on accusations of rejecting the new currency or trading using exchange rates higher than the official rate. The Reserve Bank didn't name the affected businesses. □



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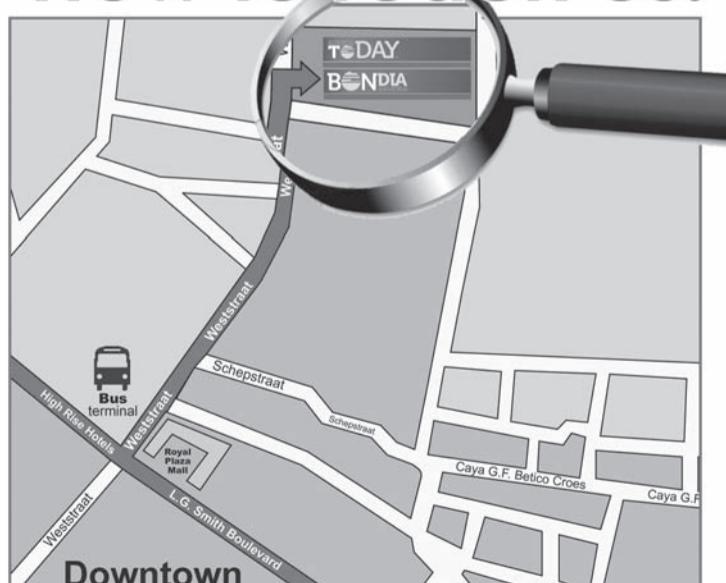


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## Nicki Minaj's England concert postponed after rapper was detained by Dutch authorities over pot

**MANCHESTER, England (AP)** — Nicki Minaj's concert in Manchester scheduled for Saturday night was postponed after police in the Netherlands discovered marijuana in her bags as she was preparing to leave the country.

Promoter Live Nation said the performance will be rescheduled and tickets will be honored.

"Despite Nicki's best efforts to explore every possible avenue to make tonight's show happen, the events of today have made it impossible," the promoter said in a statement. "We are deeply disappointed by the inconvenience this has caused." Minaj tweeted earlier Saturday that she was stopped at the Amsterdam airport as she was about to board a plane for the concert in Manchester. Police told her they found marijuana in her bags, and it would have to be weighed,



**FILE** - Nicki Minaj arrives at the MTV Video Music Awards on Sept. 12, 2023, at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J. Rapper Nicki Minaj says bags were searched on way out of Netherlands. She tweeted that police told her they found marijuana in her bags. The military constabulary at the airport said a 41-year-old American woman had been arrested for exporting "soft drugs."

(Photo by Evan Agostini/Invision/AP, File)

she tweeted. Cannabis is illegal in the Netherlands, but it is tolerated for recreational use.

Robert Van Kapel, a spokesperson for the Netherlands military police, said

a 41-year-old American woman had been arrested for exporting "soft drugs." He did not identify the woman

or elaborate on the type of drugs in question. Police later tweeted that they fined the woman and released her. Minaj, who is 41 years old, tweeted that she believes police just wanted to make her late for her concert in Manchester.

"Told you, it's to try to make me late so that they can write negative stories. Jealousy is a disease. You know the rest," Minaj tweeted.

Her representatives didn't immediately respond to messages Saturday.

The Trinidadian-born rapper is best known for her hits "Super Freaky Girl," "Anaconda" and "Starships." She has been nominated for 12 Grammy awards over the course of her career. The Manchester concert is part of her "Pink Friday 2" tour, which includes stops in Paris, Poland, Germany, Romania and Switzerland. □

## Poor neighborhood in Peru's Amazon region hosts film festival celebrating tropical forests

**By RODRIGO ABD and FRANKLIN BRICEÑO**

**Associated Press**

**BELÉN, Peru (AP)** — In the heart of Peru's Amazon region, a poor neighborhood put aside the trials and tribulations of everyday life and celebrated an international film festival with works from countries with tropical forests.

Many who attended the 10-day event had never seen a movie on the big screen, and the one used for the festival

was itself unique due to the area's geography.

"The festival aims to be a tribute to the jungles of the world and its people, to the Indigenous communities, in which we believe lies the answer to the challenges and destruction that forests face now that everyone is talking about climate change," Daniel Martínez-Quintanilla, co-executive director of the festival that ends Sunday, said. Life in the community of Belén

revolves around water. Houses and businesses are built on stilts because rains regularly lead to monthslong floods. Families own canoes to move around, but children who lack one sometimes use large plastic containers instead. So, members of the Muyuna Floating Film Festival — *muyuna* in the Quechua language means "a whirlpool formed in mighty rivers" — set the screen on a 10-meter (33-foot) high wooden structure, allowing residents to enjoy the films from their canoes or the windows of their homes.

"For the first time, we are getting to know these settings that are bringing us to this community," said Belén resident Jorge Chilicahua, a 60-year-old farmer who raises chickens and plants cassava, corn and vegetables to meet his family's needs. He has never been to a movie theater.

Much of the population of Belén comes from rural areas of the Peruvian Amazon



**Spectators watch from boats a film projected on a screen set up on a wooden structure during the Muyuna Floating Film Festival, that celebrates tropical forests, in the Belen neighborhood of Iquitos, Peru, Saturday, May 25, 2024.**

(AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



**Spectators sit on boats watching a film projected on a screen set up on a wooden structure during the Muyuna Floating Film Festival, that celebrates tropical forests, in the Belen neighborhood of Iquitos, Peru, Saturday, May 25, 2024.**

(AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

and are part of various Indigenous groups, including the Kukama, Yagua and Bora, that migrated in search of better economic, educational and health opportunities. Their challenges abound.

People fish by making holes in the wooden floors of their houses, which forces mothers to keep a watchful eye over their children who do not yet know how to swim so that they don't fall into the water and drown. Health authorities have reported malnutrition and diarrhea are common

due to lack of drinking water. Martínez-Quintanilla said the event included films from Thailand, Brazil, Taiwan, Panama and other countries with tropical forests, as well as others made by young Peruvians. The works screened included the Peruvian animated short film "The Engine and the Melody," which tells the story of an ant that fells Amazonian trees and a cicada that manages to regenerate the forest by playing a prodigious flute — until everything changes when a forest fire occurs. □

# Leclerc's win removes Monaco millstone. Ferrari boss hopeful the gap to Red Bull is closing

By JEROME PUGMIRE  
AP Auto Racing Writer

**MONACO (AP)** — Ferrari doubled its win tally from all last season and Charles Leclerc ended his barren two-year run in Formula 1 with victory from pole position at Sunday's Monaco Grand Prix.

Eight races into this season, Ferrari and McLaren are looking like they might be able to challenge Red Bull. For F1 fans as a whole it offers hope of more competitive racing.

"It's exciting and I hope it will be like this for the rest of the season," Ferrari team principal Frédéric Vasseur said after Sunday's race. "It will be up and down until the end." It wasn't last season, when Max Verstappen beat his own F1 record with an astounding 19 wins for Red Bull. His teammate Sergio Perez got two victories, and the only non-Red Bull driver to win was Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr.

Leclerc and Sainz have one win each this year and so has McLaren's Lando Norris. That makes it 5-3 to Red Bull so far — all Verstappen wins — while Leclerc's Monaco pole on Saturday ended Verstappen's bid for a record-extending ninth straight pole.

Vasseur feels the momentum could be shifting.

"You have a kind of snowball effect," Vasseur said. "You have to continue like this."

The 35-year-old Frenchman has known Leclerc since they worked together at Sauber in 2018 in Leclerc's F1 debut. They were re-united when Vasseur took charge at Ferrari in December 2022, but Leclerc didn't win a race last year despite showing good pace in qualifying with five poles. Some of Leclerc's performances were inconsistent. He made some clumsy mistakes and he wasn't showing the composure to go with his undoubted speed: Leclerc is considered the quickest in F1 along with Verstappen.

Vasseur felt Leclerc was putting too much pres-



Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc of Monaco celebrates on the podium after winning the Formula One Monaco Grand Prix race at the Monaco racetrack, in Monaco, Sunday, May 26, 2024.

(AP Photo/Luca Bruno)

sure on himself, nowhere more so than in Monaco. It's where Leclerc grew up and, much to his anguish, where he had failed to fin-

ish on the podium up until Sunday's win.

With family and friends, including Prince Albert, watching him, Monaco

was feeling like a curse for Leclerc.

He took pole in 2021, but could not even start the race due to a gearbox problem.

Exasperating enough, but worse was to come.

Leclerc led from pole in 2022 until Ferrari, under its previous leadership, made an erratic and incorrect call to change his tires after 22 laps and it cost him an odds-on victory.

Given all of this, Vasseur thinks that Leclerc's win on Sunday will free him up mentally.

"It was an important one winning in Monaco, a weight off his shoulders. I think this one can help him a lot," Vasseur said. "Last year he

was a bit nervous. This time he was much, much more relaxed from the beginning." Leclerc agreed, saying he slept very well on Saturday night — although that was also down to what he ate. When he got home, Leclerc made a quick decision, threw dietary requirements out the window and ordered a giant pizza.

"I ate like crazy yesterday night. I actually got too late at home and I couldn't cook, so I ordered my favorite pizza, which is not the best preparation to race normally," he said. "But I was like, 'OK, maybe mentally it will help me to take the pressure off a little bit'. And yeah, that's it. I slept really well." □



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### Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all throughout the year, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! □

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